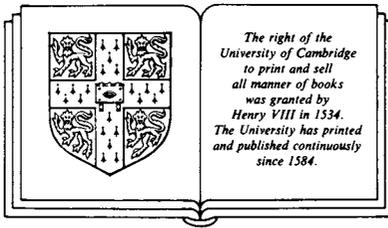


# The development of the SA in Nürnberg, 1922–1934

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# 1 Nürnberg and the emergence of National Socialism

That the Nazi party did not make its formal debut in Nürnberg until October 1922 could be seen either as historical irony or as yet another confirmation of the frequently ambiguous relationship between Nürnberg and Munich, capital of Bavaria. In Munich, Adolf Hitler had for the past three years busily and effectively transformed the NSDAP from a nearly unknown organization into a party increasingly familiar and disruptive—not the least because of the strong-arm tactics of the stormtroopers who worked in often uneasy alliance with the NSDAP. For nearly as long, the notorious anti-Semite Julius Streicher, local head of a *völkisch* rival organization, had resisted Hitler's attempts to gain a foothold in Nürnberg. The city whose name would some day become synonymous with the bombast and legalized brutality of Nazism thus initially represented to Hitler a source of opposition in his quest to gain domination over the *völkisch* movement.

Yet Nürnberg and Munich had frequently represented different aspects of German and Bavarian development. Situated about 120 kilometers north of Augsburg and 200 kilometers southeast of Frankfurt on the Main, medieval Nürnberg capitalized on its political importance as a residence of the Hohenstauffens to build up a far-flung network of trade that placed it athwart seven major trading routes linking the city with Antwerp in the northwest, Hamburg in the north, Prague and Breslau to the east, Venice in the south, and Geneva and Lyon to the southwest. The prosperity of its patriciate, which dominated the free imperial city politically until the beginning of the nineteenth century, combined with the productivity of a flourishing artisanate and the artistic genius of such people as Hans Vischer, Veit Stoss, and Albrecht Dürer, made Nürnberg a center of both trade and artistic life.<sup>1</sup> Yet the city, which with its fifty thousand inhabitants had become Germany's third largest by the sixteenth century, steadily declined in political and economic importance over the next two hundred and fifty years.<sup>2</sup> The shift in trade routes from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic combined with the failure of Nürnberg's merchants to adapt themselves to commercial innovations and the growing importance of the territorial state sapped Nürnberg's strength. In 1791, too weak and impoverished to protect its territory, the free imperial city was forced to surrender all its lands lying beyond the city walls to the state of Prussia, which had recently acquired the neighboring margravates of Ansbach and Bay-

reuth.<sup>3</sup> But for its debt of 12 million gulden, Nürnberg would probably have been annexed by Prussia. In 1806, after three years of protracted negotiations among France, Prussia, and Bavaria, the last named officially took possession of the city.<sup>4</sup>

Napoleon's territorial reforms in Bavaria helped to pave the way for Nürnberg's economic revival. In spite of that, resentment against Bavaria would continue to exist well into the twentieth century. As a predominantly Protestant city, Nürnberg, like much of the surrounding region of Franconia, formed a religious enclave in largely Catholic Bavaria. As a former free imperial city, Nürnberg had previously oriented its political sentiments toward the Holy Roman Empire rather than the territorial state that Bavaria represented. And Nürnberg's one-time importance as a Reichstag city may have subconsciously strengthened the views common among the inhabitants of Central and Upper Franconia that their region constituted a bridge to the Reich.<sup>5</sup> If to these attitudes is added the resentment against Munich for its alleged discrimination against Nürnberg, it is evident that the authorities of Bavaria's two largest cities did not share the same views.

The economic development of Nürnberg during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries further emphasized these differences. The city's rising population partly reflected its economic growth. At the time of its incorporation into Bavaria, Nürnberg's population numbered 25,000; by 1880 it was four times as high; and at the time of the 1925 census the nearly 400,000 residents of Nürnberg made it Germany's twelfth largest city.<sup>6</sup> This population growth resulted largely from a rapid process of industrialization that distinguished Nürnberg not only from Bavaria as a whole but from most other Bavarian cities, except for Augsburg.

Railroad construction provided one of the strongest impulses for Nürnberg's industrialization. The opening of Germany's first operable railway line in 1835, linking Nürnberg and neighboring Fürth, soon spurred on the construction of other railroads in Bavaria. For Nürnberg, which except for the declining timber reserves around the city almost totally lacked natural resources, yet possessed a population that traditionally included a high share of people working in the manufacture of metal products, railroad construction sustained and accelerated a process of industrialization that had started around 1825.<sup>7</sup> Johann Späth started to manufacture machines at the end of the 1830s, and in 1841 Johann Friedrich Klett founded a factory specializing in the production of steam engines. Renamed Cramer-Klett in 1847, the new firm emerged during the succeeding decades as Nürnberg's leading employer, with an emphasis on the production of machines and railway cars. Initially located east of the city in Wöhrd, Cramer-Klett

relocated in the southern district of Gibitzenhof in the 1880s, and after its merger near the end of the century became part of the giant MAN Works (Maschinenfabrik Augsburg-Nürnberg), which on the eve of the First World War gave employment to over 5,200 people in Nürnberg alone.<sup>8</sup> By that time, one-third of all Nürnberg workers were employed either in the production of machinery or in other branches of the metal-working industry.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the electrical industry, concentrated in the Schuckert Works, which specialized in the manufacture of a variety of equipment for the production and distribution of electricity, had started to rival the machine-building industry in importance. Schuckert, like MAN, was located in the southern part of the city and by the turn of the century had a labor force of nearly 8,500, with branch plants in four European countries.<sup>9</sup>

By the start of World War I, Nürnberg had become an important industrial city. Depending for its coal and iron on Bohemia and the Rhineland, much of its production was exported to other parts of Germany and to foreign countries, thus making it similar in function to such cities as Düsseldorf, Mannheim, and Magdeburg.<sup>10</sup> Apart from the industries already mentioned, the city concentrated on the manufacture of pencils, bicycles, and mechanical toys. Of particular importance for its relation with the hinterland was the brewing industry, utilizing high-quality Franconian barley and hops, and the manufacture of *Lebkuchen*, one major ingredient of which—honey—was produced in the surrounding areas. Moreover, not only the Franconian hop crop, but until the end of the century almost the entire European hop harvest, was funneled through Nürnberg.<sup>11</sup> Finally, the soapstone and steatite deposits of the hinterland gave Nürnberg and its surroundings a virtual world monopoly on the production of certain types of insulators for the electrical industry.<sup>12</sup>

Yet for Nürnberg the most important asset of the hinterland, apart from agriculture, was its population. With a birth rate well below the German average until 1870, Nürnberg like other German cities depended heavily on immigration. By 1900, less than half of those living in Nürnberg had been born there. The remainder came predominantly from other parts of Franconia, whence originated 36 percent of its population, and by 1907, 40 percent of its population.<sup>13</sup> Farmers' sons and young journeymen, mostly from the city's immediate hinterland, provided the bulk of the immigrants, and non-Bavarians formed a small minority of Nürnberg's population. Only 8 percent of those who lived in Nürnberg by 1900 and only 4 percent of those who lived there in 1925 were from outside the state. Although the population thus became geographically more homogeneous after 1900, the problem of

integrating thousands of recent arrivals was nonetheless a formidable one that contributed to the social and political tensions confronting Nürnberg during its period of industrialization.<sup>14</sup>

The outlines of these social problems are familiar enough. Industrialization demanded numerous new workers, thus staving off the threat of massive unemployment. But on the other side of the coin were the familiar sordid housing conditions, low wages, and inhumane working conditions.<sup>15</sup> Large factories increasingly replaced artisan establishments with one or two employees. In 1847, 3,091 Nürnberg master craftsmen employed slightly more than 4,000 journeymen and apprentices. An additional 192 artisans and 2,289 workers were active in about 500 enterprises geared to export. Six decades later, well over half of Nürnberg's industrial employees could be found in firms with more than 50 employees.<sup>16</sup> By 1925, more than one-fifth of the labor force worked in factories with more than 1,000 employees, another two-fifths in firms with 50 to 1,000 employees. Smaller enterprises nonetheless remained important in Nürnberg, and 26 percent of the working population were found in establishments with fewer than 6 employees.<sup>17</sup>

Of the labor force as a whole, 61 percent was found in industry, almost twice as high as the percentage within Bavaria as a whole and only slightly below that of Augsburg, the city with the largest industrial labor force.<sup>18</sup> Trade and communications also employed a much larger share of Nürnberg's labor force, 24.2 percent, compared with 12.6 percent in all of Bavaria. Of the nearly 210,000 Nürnberg men and women who held full-time jobs more than half were workers, another three-tenths were salaried employees or civil servants, and 13 percent were self-employed.<sup>19</sup>

Despite a general rise in real income, living conditions around the turn of the century were far from enviable for the majority of the population. Even relatively well paid workers with an annual family income of 1,200 to 2,000 marks found it difficult to make ends meet. When the Nürnberg Workers' Sekretariat carried out a study of working-class budgets in 1900, nearly one-third of the respondents with a family income of more than 1,200 marks found their income insufficient to meet annual expenses for that year.<sup>20</sup> In order to reduce expenses, most families took in at least one roomer or boarder. The original working-class housing in the old town, in Wöhrd, and in the Glockenhof area immediately southeast of the walls was generally of poor quality with houses dating back a century or more in some instances.<sup>21</sup> The more recent housing to the south and west, including the housing settlements of MAN and Siemens-Schuckert and those built through the Workers' Housing Association around the turn of the

century, was somewhat better in quality, whereas the best housing for workers was found in the northern parts of the city and the southwestern districts of St. Leonhard, Schweinau, and Sundersbühl.<sup>22</sup> Despite this general improvement in housing standards, more than 85 percent of the relatively well paid workers included in the Workers' Secretariat's survey of 1900 continued to live in apartments that lacked toilets, and in over a quarter of the cases, toilet facilities were located outside the building.<sup>23</sup> Although the city's administration was not altogether indifferent to these sordid living conditions, its attempts at reform were limited by municipal debts, a poverty rate well in excess of the Bavarian average, an emphasis on the construction of public buildings to accommodate the growing number of civil servants, and overcrowding within the city proper.<sup>24</sup>

Low wages and poor living conditions thus created one source of dissatisfaction among the workers. For the workers, as for certain other groups of society, legislation pertaining to trade, military service, and participation in municipal politics constituted three additional irritants. Guilds, which continued to exist until 1868, limited competition among artisans. The majority of journeymen thus had little hope of becoming master craftsmen and opening their own establishment.<sup>25</sup>

Bavaria's conscription laws were even more widely resented. Since 1828 all males had been subject to conscription upon becoming twenty-one. In practice, however, the sons of the wealthy could, until 1868, buy a replacement and thus escape military service. The Bavarian municipal code further emphasized the difference between rich and poor. The political privileges of the rich, the city's failure to care adequately for its poor citizens, the refusal to grant permanent residency to the indigenous, and even the withholding of marriage licenses from the poor all became part of a tangled web that ensnared the less privileged and reduced them to the status of political outcasts.

The municipal code of 1818 limited the municipal franchise to male residents enjoying municipal rights (*Bürgerrecht*). Consequently, only a small proportion of Nürnberg's adult population were municipal voters. What made these restrictions more irksome was both an absolute and a relative decline in the share of eligible voters during the last quarter of the century. Thus in the Reichstag election of 1875, one-quarter of the city's population had the right to vote, compared with 15.5 percent eligible to vote in state elections and 8 percent who could cast their ballots in municipal elections. Yet twelve years later, the number of eligible municipal voters had declined by nearly a thousand, equaling 4.7 percent of the city's population.<sup>26</sup> After 1908 municipal voters no longer had to possess the *Bürgerrecht*, but only in 1919 was this right conferred automatically. Throughout the nineteenth century,

Nürnberg's citizens thus formed an exclusive circle, and until 1918 the city's administration remained firmly in the hands of the upper bourgeoisie, especially the wealthy merchants and some high-ranking civil servants.

Even more discriminatory were the Bavarian residency laws. Confronted with growing pauperism and the threat that incipient economic changes would undermine social cohesion, Bavarian municipalities in the early 1830s waged a largely successful battle for greater autonomy vis-à-vis the state government. Their effective lobbying contributed to the promulgation of the Bavarian Law on Marriage and Settlement, which returned to the municipalities a previously lost absolute veto over applications on these matters. Only permanent residents of the city could henceforth obtain a marriage license.<sup>27</sup> Although some of the most onerous restrictions were removed in 1868, allowing those who had lived in the city for a certain time and who had never applied for welfare to marry without further restrictions, cities could still charge a substantial fee for marriage permits.<sup>28</sup> Apart from its obviously discriminatory nature, the law contributed to a drastic increase in illegitimate births. Moreover, the residency requirements provided municipalities with a potential escape from their obligation to the poor, since only those entitled to permanent residency were eligible for municipal welfare. To Nürnberg's credit, this escape route was rarely used, even in times of economic crisis.<sup>29</sup>

The lower classes thus not only faced frequent economic hardships and inadequate living conditions, but were unable to exert political pressure at the municipal level, where many decisions affecting their daily lives were made. For the rising Socialist movement, the municipalities' discrimination was one source of strength. A workers' association (*Arbeiterverein*) with Left-liberal orientation and consisting mostly of journeymen had been established in 1848 but was prohibited a year later. The immediate forerunner of Nürnberg's Social Democratic Party was the Workers' Educational Association (*Arbeiterbildungsverein*) which was formed in 1866. After the founding of the SPD in 1869, membership in the Nürnberg SPD increased from 123 in 1871 to 985 by 1877.<sup>30</sup> With the election of Karl Grillenberger (1848-97) to the Reichstag in 1881, the Social Democrats scored their first major political success, though Grillenberger's election owed possibly as much to the split between the National Liberals and the Progressives as to the growing strength of the Socialists.<sup>31</sup> Twelve years later, Social Democracy had become firmly established in Nürnberg. The Social Democrats held all four Nürnberg seats in the Bavarian Parliament, and in the last Reichstag election before World War I, two-thirds of Nürnberg's voters cast their ballots for the SPD. The strength of the

Socialist movement is further evident from the growth in its membership, which rose from 1,500 at the time the anti-Socialist law expired to slightly more than 21,000 in the spring of 1914.<sup>32</sup>

But only after the franchise reforms of 1908 could the SPD play a role in the city council. To a much greater extent than before, the city was henceforth drawn into political conflicts among the parties. More than that, the participation of the Socialists in determining the affairs of the city represented a loss of privilege for the established groups of Nürnberg society. Among them or their descendants, the fulminations of the National Socialists in the early twenties against parliamentary democracy could easily fall on receptive ears. If the Nazis were to succeed in carrying through their professed aim of abolishing parliamentary democracy, they, it was hoped, would do away with it at the municipal level as well.

The growing importance of Socialism in Nürnberg was also evident from the party's newspaper. Founded in 1871 as the *Fürther Demokratische Wochenblatt*, it subsequently became the *Fränkische Tagespost*. Counting several prominent German Social Democrats, such as Philipp Scheidemann, Kurt Eisner, and Dr. Adolf Braun, among its editors after 1900, the *Tagespost* emerged as Bavaria's most important Socialist newspaper.<sup>33</sup>

As elsewhere, World War I brought drastic changes to Nürnberg, the industry and even more so the commerce of which depended largely on export. These branches suffered severely from the curtailment of German exports, and unemployment became a major problem during the first months of the war. Fourteen thousand men were called into the army during August 1914, and many small and medium-sized firms had to close. Food shortages soon added to the general hardships.<sup>34</sup> As the war continued, the growing need for armaments opened up new opportunities for many of the larger firms such as the MAN and Schuckert Works. At the height of the war, twenty-three thousand women—more than a third of Nürnberg's female work force—served in the armaments industry.<sup>35</sup>

For the first three years of the war, Nürnberg's population apparently bore the sacrifices that the war demanded without overt complaints. The local press, including the *Tagespost*, supported the war effort, and Otto Gessler, the city's mayor and later the republic's *Reichswehrminister*, praised both the attitude of the press and that of the working class.<sup>36</sup> In 1917, however, the situation changed. The split within the Socialist camp led to the founding of an Independent Social Democratic branch (USPD) in April 1917. Early in 1918, Nürnberg workers went on strike. Their demands included the beginning of immediate peace negotiations, the right of self-determination for all

peoples, and the renunciation of all annexations in the future peace treaty. During the summer, another general strike threatened, and on October 10, 1918, the *Tagespost* became the first German newspaper to call for the abdication of William II.<sup>37</sup> The latter actions probably were responsible for subsequent allegations that the Bavarian revolutionary movement had originated in Nürnberg.<sup>38</sup>

Notwithstanding these allegations, the outbreak of the Bavarian revolution on November 7, 1918, brought no immediate reaction in Nürnberg. Only on the following afternoon did a workers' council (*Arbeiterrat*) constitute itself in Nürnberg, and in its meeting of the same day, the city council led by Gessler declared itself for the republic and cooperation with the provisional workers' council.<sup>39</sup> Similarly, both the workers' council and the more radical soldiers' council stated that they were ready to work with the administration. But discipline broke down among the armed units stationed in the city and the soldiers' council created a workers' guard, which together with two naval units maintained order.<sup>40</sup> On the whole, Gessler's previous policy of working with the leaders of the Majority Socialists and of the trade unions now helped to prevent the more radical sections of the population from assuming a commanding role.

The relatively moderate stand of Nürnberg's citizenry was reflected in the results of the elections to the National Assembly and to the new Bavarian Parliament in January 1919. Nearly 90 percent of the electorate, which for the first time included women, participated in each election. Winning more than 51 percent of the votes cast, the Majority Socialists achieved an absolute majority. By comparison, the Independent Social Democrats received only 7.5 and 5.6 percent in the National Assembly and state elections, respectively. Nearly three-tenths of the voters cast their ballot for the Democratic Party (DDP), whereas the Bavarian People's Party received 10 percent (Table 1.1).<sup>41</sup>

January 1919 did, however, bring Nürnberg its first major act of political violence since the fall of the monarchy. The Spartacist uprisings resulted in the occupation of the *Tagespost* building on January 7. On February 16, demonstrators led by the USPD occupied the premises of the *Fränkischer Kurier*, Nürnberg's major conservative paper, and stormed the Deutschhaus barracks, seat of the deputy high command of Army Corps III.<sup>42</sup> Following the assassination of the Bavarian prime minister, Kurt Eisner, on February 21, 1919, an unsuccessful attempt to unseat the Majority Socialists occurred in the city.

The brief existence of the Bavarian Soviet Republic led to further violence in Nürnberg. At a Spartacist meeting on April 7 and 8 plans for a revolutionary uprising in the city were discussed, and three weeks later violence erupted after the Nürnberg army command ordered the

Table 1.1. *Results of the 1919 elections in Nürnberg*

	Election		
	National Assembly (Jan. 1919)	State (Jan. 1919)	Municipal (June 1919)
No. of eligible voters	218,082	212,634	228,453
Valid votes cast	193,096	193,009	138,453
As % of total	88.5	90.8	60.7
Social Democrats (SPD), %	51.7	51.7	37.9
Independent Social Democrats, %	7.5	5.6	22.6
Bavarian People's Party (BVP), %	9.1	9.6	8.9
Democratic Party (DDP), %	–	29.3	21.2
German People's Party (DVP), %	28.7	–	–
Mittel (Mittelstands) Partei, %	3.0	2.7	5.8
Others, %	–	1.1	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Source:* Dr. Gerhard Hirschmann, Municipal Archives, Nürnberg, December 23, 1970.

arrest of suspect Communist leaders and killed one of them while trying to arrest him.<sup>43</sup> A major factor in the defeat of the revolution was the attitude of the army, which, on April 7, had declared itself loyal to the legal Bavarian government under Johannes Hoffman. But the decision of the workers' and soldiers' councils to vote against a motion calling for the proclamation of a soviet republic in Nürnberg was equally important. The statement of a city official at a meeting in the Nürnberg army barracks on April 7 probably reflected the views of all but the extremists:

Death by starvation is the certain result for us Bavarians were we to follow Munich's example. What is done in Munich – and there everything is possible – is not necessary for the rest of Bavaria.<sup>44</sup>

The revolution in Nürnberg failed just as it did throughout Bavaria. But the isolated incidents of violence in the city, combined with the knowledge of the more serious uprisings in Munich and Berlin as well

as the frustration that the more radical groups in Nürnberg experienced, helped to polarize the population in general and the working class in particular. This is evident from, among other things, a comparison of the municipal election results of June 15, 1919 with the results of the earlier elections of January.

First, a much smaller proportion of the electorate—only 60 percent—decided to vote in June. More importantly, the two major democratic parties suffered severe losses. With 38 percent of the votes, the Majority Socialists were still in the lead, but they had lost their absolute majority. The Democrats meanwhile had to be content with one-fifth of the votes.<sup>45</sup> Since it was the Independent Socialists who benefited most from the SPD losses, it seems clear that many working-class voters had become dissatisfied with the Majority Socialists. On the other hand, DDP losses resulted largely from the splintering of the middle-class vote. In contrast to the January elections, the municipal elections of June were contested by a variety of middle-class parties, several of which represented particular economic interest groups, such as real estate owners and members of the “middle estate.” In addition, there was a Municipal Reform Party and an Old Democratic Party. Only one of these received more than 5 percent of the vote, but the combined result was sufficient to weaken seriously the Democratic Party. This inaugurated a trend that would become increasingly strong and end in the virtual disappearance of the DDP by the close of the 1920s. As early as the 1920 Reichstag elections, DDP votes in Nürnberg declined significantly. After the 1924 municipal elections, DDP representation on the city council was reduced to three of fifty seats, as compared with the ten seats the party had held previously.<sup>46</sup>

The increasing weakness of the DDP after 1924 was one of the tragic developments in Weimar politics. In Nürnberg the split between radicals, moderates and reactionaries within the middle class was the major reason for the decline of the DDP. Nürnberg industrialists, who initially supported the DDP, withdrew their support because of industry's opposition to the Factory Council Law during the second half of 1919.<sup>47</sup> Their withdrawal was followed by that of other conservative circles, including the editors of the *Fränkischer Kurier*. The *Kurier's* defection was particularly serious because the paper now became an adamant foe of the city's new lord mayor, Dr. Hermann Luppe (1874-1945), himself a leading member of the DDP.<sup>48</sup>

Luppe replaced Otto Gessler in March 1920 following Gessler's appointment as minister of reconstruction. Before coming to Nürnberg, Luppe had been a city councilor and later deputy mayor of Frankfurt on the Main and a member of the National Assembly between 1919 and 1920. A highly qualified administrator deeply interested in municipi-

pal welfare, Luppe was the unanimous choice of the middle-class parties and the SPD.<sup>49</sup>

Few people questioned Luppe's qualifications. Nonetheless, he soon found himself under attack from various quarters. Since the new mayor was neither a native of Nürnberg, nor even of Bavaria, a certain amount of friction was probably inevitable. When the leader of Nürnberg's Nazis, Julius Streicher, referred to the mayor's previous career and added that ". . . from Frankfurt-am-Main much misfortune has already come into this world" he probably struck a responsive chord in the minds of particularists and antirepublicans.<sup>50</sup> Luppe's determined antiparticularism and his often voiced desire for a stronger federal government confirmed this latent mistrust, including that of the BVP. And in advocating a policy of understanding towards Germany's recent enemies, Luppe was bound to incur the hostility of the entire Right.

The new mayor faced formidable economic and political problems. Shortages of raw materials and coal for industry, and the loss of Nürnberg's traditional export markets had caused considerable unemployment in the immediate postwar period. Rising throughout 1919, unemployment stabilized in 1920, yet by the fall of 1920, thirty-five hundred individuals were still without work in Nürnberg. In August of that year, the unemployed demonstrated in front of city hall and demanded that benefits be raised.<sup>51</sup> The initial inflationary period resulted in temporary improvements between 1920 and 1922, as the currency devaluation lowered the price of German goods and opened new foreign markets,<sup>52</sup> but the dizzying downward plunge of the mark in 1922-23 ended this short-lived prosperity. At the beginning of December 1923, Nürnberg's unemployed numbered more than sixteen thousand.

Lack of housing and food shortages resulted in other hardships. As throughout Germany, few houses had been built in Nürnberg during the war, thus exacerbating an already serious housing problem. The influx of new immigrants during and after the war, together with soaring construction costs and a largely ineffective housing policy, aggravated what was to become a major problem throughout the Weimar Republic.<sup>53</sup> Dwindling food supplies made the situation even worse. As a result, the city council imposed in March 1919 a ban on immigration into Nürnberg, and the budget debates of that year referred to the serious economic crisis Nürnberg faced.<sup>54</sup> Although the decline in unemployment between mid-1920 and 1922 alleviated some of the economic hardships, the growing currency devaluation and the escalating food prices created new difficulties. By the end of 1921, Nürnberg prices were the second highest in Bavaria. In July 1922 an ugly incident at the farmers' market revealed the extent of consumer dissatisfaction.

A working-class woman complained to a farmer's wife about the high price she charged for beans, and the vendor replied that people who considered the prices too high could always eat dirt. Several bystanders overheard the remark, the crowd became menacing, and the farmer's wife was forced to seek refuge in the office of the market clerk.<sup>55</sup> According to the press, such an incident was long overdue, since farmers showed little understanding of the city dwellers' plight.

The growing economic pressures had obvious social and political ramifications. As early as July 1921, a press report mentioned that the price spiral hit young single people particularly hard. The high rents they paid for furnished rooms, the increased cost of restaurant meals, and the tax benefits that married couples enjoyed meant that the living expenses of single people were nearly as high as those of married couples without children.<sup>56</sup> Four months later, a government report noted the bitter feelings that rapidly increasing prices were causing among consumers. In order to meet expenses, many people had to use their savings. As a result,

many citizens who have so far been loyal to the constitution are moving entirely to the Left, and radical agitators exploit the population's misery for partisan purposes.<sup>57</sup>

That the inflation contributed to the radicalization of the population and to the growth of antirepublican views is undoubtedly true.<sup>58</sup> But in 1921, as on many other occasions, government observers tended to exaggerate threats from the Left and to ignore those emanating from the Right. For the mass of the working class in Nürnberg, radical Marxism had relatively little appeal. According to a police report of January 1920, the majority of the workers at the MAN Works had shifted their allegiance from the MSPD to either the Independent Social Democrats or the Communist Party. Yet in December 1919, the Nürnberg KPD had only 275 members, whereas the Majority Socialists had nearly 15,000, and the USPD had slightly over 7,000 in the fall of 1920.<sup>59</sup> When the USPD split as a result of its Halle meeting in October 1920, several thousand of its Nürnberg members left the party, the majority going to the KPD. By the summer of 1921, membership among the Independents had dwindled to 2,000. At the same time, the Majority Socialists had experienced an increase of 3,000 members.<sup>60</sup> Assuming that SPD membership remained fairly stable in the first nine months of 1920, it appears that the losses of the USPD at least partially benefited the more moderate Majority Socialists.

To characterize Nürnberg's workers as predominantly radical, which an uncritical reading of the police reports might suggest, would be erroneous. That it would be equally wrong to describe them as entirely